

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL BELFAST

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SUBJ: ASSASSINATION OF BRITISH AMBASSADOR

SUMMARY: THE ASSASSINATION OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR AND A SECRETARY IN DUBLIN IS STILL THE MAIN FOCUS OF ATTENTION HERE. PEACE, RECONCILIATION, AND STRENGTHENING OF BRITISH-IRISH FRIENDSHIP ARE THE MAIN THEMES IN THE WIDOW'S ADDRESS TO THE IRISH NATION AND IN THE IMPRESSIVE MEMORIAL SERVICE. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO SUCCESS IN THE SEARCH FOR THE KILLERS, ONE PAPER CITES A SOURCE AS ATTRIBUTING THE KILLINGS TO A BREAKAWAY IRA GROUP. THE GOI IS RECALLING ITS PARLIAMENT TO PASS FURTHER ANTI-TERRORIST LAWS. END SUMMARY

1. IRISH MEDIA CONTINUE TO GIVE FULL COVERAGE TO THE ASSASSINATION OF AMBASSADOR EWART-BIGGS. THE AMBASSADOR'S WIDOW MADE A MOVING APPEAL OVER IRISH RADIO-TELEVISION JULY 28 TELLING OF HER HUSBAND'S HOPES FOR HIS MISSION IN DUBLIN. BEGIN QUOTE. CHRISTOPHER WANTED A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN AND IRELAND THAT WAS DIRECT AND TRUTHFUL AND WHICH, WITHOUT IGNORING THE LESSONS OF THE PAST FOR THE PROBLEMS OF THE MOMENT, CONCENTRATED ON FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS AND TO ACHIEVE OUR COMMON AIMS AS PARTNERS IN

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EUROPE. I KNOW THAT EVEN AFTER TWO WEEKS HE WAS HAPPY IN

THE REALIZATION THAT HE WAS ON THE WAY TO CREATING THIS RELATIONSHIP. HE HOPED THAT IT WOULD HELP REASON AND PEACE TO PREVAIL OVER MISUNDERSTANDING AND VIOLENCE WHICH, AS MANY OF YOU WILL HAVE READ, CHRISTOPHER THROUGH HIS EXPERIENCE OF IT THROUGH THE WAR AND IN ALGERIA FOUND SO REPELLANT. END QUOTE.

2. THE WIDOW'S APPEAL FOLLOWED A MEMORIAL SERVICE IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL ATTENDED BY THE IRISH PRESIDENT, ALL IRISH NOTABLES WHO WERE IN TOWN, THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN, BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS HATTERSLEY, AND MANY OTHERS. THE VENUE WAS SYMBOLIC, AS DUBLIN'S GREAT CATHEDRAL IS STILL OWNED BY THE CHURCH OF IRELAND (ANGLICAN), AND THIS OWNERSHIP HAS BEEN A SORE POINT TO THE PRE-DOMINANTLY CATHOLIC REPUBLIC.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD GAVE THE EULOGY, AND HIS THEME WAS THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES: QUOTE. THE SHOCK AND FOR US THE SHAME OF HIS MURDER AND THE MURDER OF JUDITH COOKE HAVE HAD PROFOUND EFFECTS ON ALL OF US. NO DOUBT THE PERPETRATORS CALCULATED, WITH THEIR UNFAILING LACK OF INSIGHT OR UNDERSTANDING, THAT ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS WOULD BE SEVERELY WEAKENED, PERHAPS PERMANENTLY DESTROYED, BY SUCH AN ATROCITY. THAT THE OPPOSITE HAS BEEN THE CASE IS NOW EVIDENT TO ALL. OUR TWO PEOPLES, WHOSE PASTS HAVE BEEN SO CLOSELY LINKED FOR ILL AND FOR GOOD THROUGHOUT EIGHT CENTURIES, HAVE CONFOUNDED OUR COMMON ENEMY BY RESPONDING TO THIS TRAGEDY WITH A DEEPENED SENSE OF OUR CLOSE INTERDEPENDENCE, AND OF OUR COMMON INTEREST IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AND AVERTING ANARCHY. END QUOTE.

4. MEANWHILE THE MASSIVE HUNT FOR THE KILLERS CONTINUES, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD AND I FULLY DISCUSSED THE WHOLE SAD AFFAIR AT A PRIVATE LUNCH ON JULY 25 AND HE SAID THAT IT IS STILL NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE KILLERS WERE AFTER AMB. EWART-BIGGS OR PERM. UNDER-SECRETARY CUBBEN.

5. THE IRISH INDEPENDENT OF JULY 28 QUOTES UNNAMED "TOP LEVEL" PROVISIONAL IRA SOURCES IN BELFAST AS STATING THAT THE KILLINGS WERE DONE BY A PROVISIONAL SPLINTER GROUP WHO ARE SUPPORTERS OF EDDIE GALLAGHER AND DR ROSE DUGDALE. THESE TWO ARE TERRORISTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CURRENTLY SERVING LONG PRISON SENTENCES. THE GROUP SUPPOSEDLY NUMBERS ABOUT 20. THE IRA SOURCE SAID THE PROVOS QUOTE DID NOT KNOW THE ATTACK WAS BEING PLANNED AND WERE NOT CONSULTED ABOUT IT. END QUOTE. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, SAY THAT THE PROVISIONALS DISAPPROVED OF THE KILLINGS.

6. THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO RECALL THE IRISH PARLIAMENT FROM VACATION IN AUGUST, PROBABLY ABOUT THE THIRD WEEK, TO PASS

NEW ANTI-TERRORIST LEGISLATION WHICH IS NOW BEING DRAFTED. SO FAR THE GOVERNMENT IS BEING DELIBERATELY VAGUE ABOUT THE EXACT NATURE OF THE NEW LAWS, BUT THEY WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY INCLUDE MUCH STIFFER SENTENCES FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITY. IN GENERAL THE NEW LEGISLATION IS EXPECTED TO BE MERELY A TIDYING UP OF EXISTING ANTI-TERRORIST MEASURES ON THE BOOKS. IRELAND ALREADY HAS THE TOUGHEST ANTI-TERRORIST LAWS IN WESTERN EUROPE. THE MAIN POINT IS THE RECALL OF PARLIAMENT DURING THE SACROSANCT VACATION PERIOD, A GESTURE TO SHOW BOTH THE BRITISH AND THE IRA THAT THE ASSASSINATION IS NOT BEING TAKEN LIGHTLY.

7. ANOTHER IRISH GESTURE HAS BEEN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUND BY FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD, POST AND TELEGRAPHS MINISTER O'BRIEN, AND OPPOSITION LEADER LYNCH AS A MEMORIAL TO AMBASSADOR EWART-BIGGS. THE FUND WILL SPONSOR AN ANNUAL ESSAY PRIZE FOR THE WRITER WHOSE WORK IS JUDGED TO HAVE DONE MOST TO PROMOTE THE IDEALS OF THE LATE AMBASSADOR: BEGIN QUOTE. PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING IN IRELAND AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE LINKS THAT BIND THE PEOPLES OF IRELAND AND BRITAIN. END QUOTE. CURLEY

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